

CHILD NUTRITION AND FOOD DISTRIBUTION DIVISION

MANAGEMENT BULLETIN

No.: 98-811

TO:	All Public and Private Schools Participating in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs County Superintendents of Schools Diocesan Superintendents of Schools	ISSUE DATE: June 1998
FROM:	Nutrition Standards Unit	
ATTENTION:	Food Service Directors	
SUBJECT:	Milk as a Menu Item under Nutrient Standard Menu Planning	
REFERENCES:	7 CFR Section 210.10(I)(2)	

This Management Bulletin transmits information from the United States Department of Agriculture, clarifying how milk and other beverages should be listed on the menu under the Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (NSMP) option. The issue is whether fluid milk should be planned and offered as a choice with other beverages such as tea or juice.

Federal regulations under NSMP specify that a reimbursable lunch shall be priced as a unit and shall include a minimum of three menu items: an entree, fluid milk as a beverage, and one other menu item (side dish) which may be any food except a condiment or a food of minimal nutritional value.

There is no "beverage" menu item category under NSMP. That means that if a school wants to offer other beverages as part of the reimbursable meal, they may not be offered as an alternative to milk. A school may offer other beverages in addition to milk as long as students are aware that the choice is not between milk and other beverages. Other beverages may be offered as one of the side dish choices which are part of the school's unit-priced meal. The school's policy should be clearly publicized so that students understand their options.

When formulating menus, schools should keep in mind that certain beverages may contain calories, but few other nutrients and that their placement on the menu may put them in competition with more nutritious foods. Schools still may offer those beverages as a menu item, but could structure the menu in such a way that beverages other than milk clearly are in the category of additional menu items. For example, students may be offered a choice of entrees, a choice of two items from a selection of fruits and vegetables, a choice of milk, and a choice of one item from a group including desserts, flavored juices (full-strength juices could be listed as a choice in a fruit/vegetable category) or teas. In this way, alternative beverages are available as part of a reimbursable meal but are not offered in the same group as alternatives to milk or to other nutritious foods.

If you have questions, please contact Cindy Schneider, Child Nutrition Consultant, Nutrition Standards Unit, at (916) 322-1566 or leave a message at the toll free number (800) 952-5609.

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